

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
DALLAS DIVISION

CRYSTAL DENISE HAMILTON

Petitioner,

VS.

DOUGLAS DRETKE, Director
Texas Department of Criminal Justice,
Correctional Institutions Division

Respondent.

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NO. 3-05-CV-2380-N

**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

Petitioner Crystal Denise Hamilton, appearing *pro se*, has filed an application for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. For the reasons stated herein, the application should be dismissed on limitations grounds.

I.

Petitioner pled guilty to murder and was sentenced to 40 years confinement. No appeal was taken. Instead, petitioner filed an application for state post-conviction relief. The application was denied without written order. *Ex parte Hamilton*, No. 62,943-01 (Tex. Crim. App. Sept. 28, 2005). Petitioner then filed this action in federal court.

II.

In two grounds for relief, petitioner contends that: (1) the prosecutor failed to disclose evidence favorable to the defense; and (2) she received ineffective assistance of counsel.

By order dated December 9, 2005, the court *sua sponte* questioned whether this case was time-barred under the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 ("AEDPA"). Petitioner

was invited to address the limitations issue in a written reply, but failed to do so. The court now determines that this case should be dismissed on limitations grounds.

A.

The AEDPA establishes a one-year statute of limitations for federal habeas proceedings brought under 28 U.S.C. § 2254. *See* ANTITERRORISM AND EFFECTIVE DEATH PENALTY ACT, Pub.L. 104-132, 110 Stat. 1214 (1996). The limitations period runs from the latest of:

- (A) the date on which the judgment became final by the conclusion of direct review or the expiration of the time for seeking direct review;
- (B) the date on which the impediment to filing an application created by State action in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States is removed, if the applicant was prevented from filing by such State action;
- (C) the date on which the constitutional right asserted was initially recognized by the Supreme Court, if the right has been newly recognized by the Supreme Court and made retroactively applicable to cases on collateral review; or
- (D) the date on which the factual predicate of the claim or claims presented could have been discovered through the exercise of due diligence.

See 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(1). The time during which a properly filed application for state post-conviction or other collateral review is pending is excluded from the limitations period. *Id.* § 2244(d)(2). The AEDPA statute of limitations is also subject to equitable tolling in "rare and exceptional" circumstances. *See Davis v. Johnson*, 158 F.3d 806, 811 (5th Cir. 1998), *cert. denied*, 119 S.Ct. 1474 (1999).

B.

Petitioner was sentenced to 40 years in prison for murder. Judgment was entered on May 27, 2003 and no appeal was taken. Therefore, petitioner's conviction became final 30 days thereafter

on June 26, 2003. *See* TEX. R. APP. P. 26.2. Petitioner filed an application for state post-conviction relief on July 21, 2005. The application was denied on September 28, 2005. Petitioner filed this action in federal court on November 29, 2005.

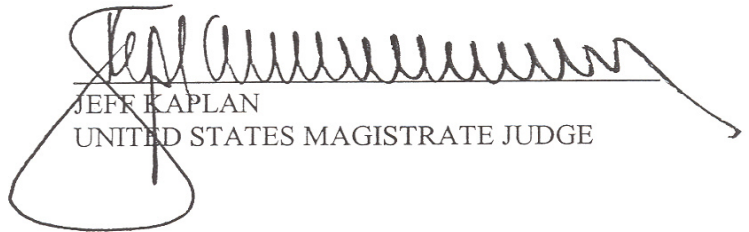
The AEDPA statute of limitations started to run on June 26, 2003 when petitioner's conviction became final. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(1)(A). Yet petitioner waited more than *two years* before seeking post-conviction relief in state or federal court. No explanation has been offered to justify this delay. Accordingly, this case is barred by limitations and should be dismissed.

RECOMMENDATION

Petitioner's application for writ of habeas corpus is barred by limitations and should be dismissed with prejudice.

A copy of this report and recommendation shall be served on all parties in the manner provided by law. Any party may file written objections to the recommendation within 10 days after being served with a copy. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); FED. R. CIV. P. 72(b). The failure to file written objections will bar the aggrieved party from appealing the factual findings and legal conclusions of the magistrate judge that are accepted or adopted by the district court, except upon grounds of plain error. *See Douglass v. United Services Automobile Ass'n*, 79 F.3d 1415, 1417 (5th Cir. 1996).

DATED: January 26, 2006.


JEFF KAPLAN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE